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ABSTRACT

Presented is a research based method by which a state or regional professional organization may select the outstanding paper from those submitted for consideration. The procedure is conducted in three steps: submission, initial review, and final selection. During the initial review process the selection committee (four or more members) reviews all of the papers submitted. They are reviewed and rated on an instrument used by Ward, Hall, and Schramm in 1975 in a study of published educational research. The resulting rankings are used to identify the top five papers. The final selection requires that 10 qualified judges from outside the state or region be identified. Each paper is paired with every other paper. The readers compare the two papers in one of the 10 pairs. Standard pair comparison procedures are then used to determine the best paper from among those submitted. This method has resulted in the successful selection of the outstanding paper in the Mid-South Educational Research Association for the past 4 years. (Author/PN)

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A RESEARCH BASED METHOD BY WHICH A STATE OR REGIONAL ASSOCIATION MAY SELECT ITS OUTSTANDING PAPER

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and
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TM 820 365

Paper presented at the

American Educational Research Association 1982 Annual Meeting

March 19-23, 1982

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to present a method by which a state or regional professional organization may select the outstanding paper from those submitted for consideration. The method has the advantages of being research based and requiring outside readers to review only two papers each. The procedure is conducted in three steps. Step 2 results in the identification of the top five papers which were submitted in Step 1. Step 3 is the selection of the most outstanding paper from among these five.

During the second step, the initial review process, the selection committee (with four or more members) reviews all of the papers submitted. They are reviewed and rated on an instrument used by Ward, Hall, and Schramm in 1975 in a study of published educational research. The resulting rankings are used to identify the top five papers.

Step 3 requires that 10 qualified judges from outside the state or region be identified. Each paper is paired with every other paper. The 10 readers are asked to compare the two papers in one of the 10 pairs. Standard pair comparison procedures are then used to determine the "best" paper from among those submitted.

This method has resulted in the successful selection of the outstanding paper in the Mid-South Educational Research Association for the past 4 years.

A RESEARCH BASED METHOD BY WHICH A STATE OR REGIONAL ASSOCIATION MAY SELECT ITS OUTSTANDING PAPER

The selection of an outstanding paper is a process that can enhance the image of an association or cause lingering problems. It is easily seen how the selection of a strong research paper may enhance the image of an entire association. The selection of a poor one may do just the opposite. Furthermore, a biased selection procedure can alienate members of the association as well as result in the selection of an inferior paper.

The purpose of this paper is to present a method by which a state or regional professional association can select its outstanding paper from among those submitted for consideration. The method has the advantages of being research based and requires outside readers to review only two papers each. The selection procedure consists of three steps--submission, initial review, and final selection.

Paper Submission

The timely announcement of a winner at an annual meeting requires that papers be submitted prior to that time. The entire process should require about six months (Appendix A) while the selection process consumes about half of that time.

The announcement of the competition should include all pertinent information (Appendix B). A basic minimum of information would include

an announcement of the competition, submission requirements (e.g., six copies of entire paper), deadline, and where to submit. Other information such as a description of the selection process and the benefits of winning also could be included. Acknowledgments should be sent as each paper is received (Appendix C).

Requiring members to submit their papers for the competition in addition to their regular submission for paper presentation has several advantages. The first is the high degree of self selection that takes place. The authors are often their own harshest critics. Thus papers with major flaws seldom get submitted in the first place. A second advantage is that self selection greatly reduces the number of papers which must be judged. The reduced number of papers facilitates the initial review process.

Initial Review Process

The initial review process reduces the number of papers under consideration to five. The process for accomplishing this review depends on the number of papers which have been submitted. A rule of thumb is that no member of the committee should review more than about 10 papers. Thus, if more than 10 papers were submitted, committee members would read only a subset of the papers. In order to reduce bias, each paper should be read and ranked by at least three readers. This may require the size of the committee be increased.

Each committee member should read and rank (1 = best, 2 = second best, etc.) the papers assigned to him or her. An instrument

used by Ward, Hall, and Schramm (1975) in a study of published research can be used for this purpose (Appendix D).

The committee chairperson collects the rankings and averages them for each paper. The five papers with the highest average rankings (lowest point values) become the five finalists. The process described above should insure that the best paper is at least among the finalists.

Final Selection

The selection of the outstanding paper from among the finalists is done by readers from outside the state or region. Past experience has indicated that professionals of the quality desired for this task are not likely to agree to evaluate five papers. A solution to this problem is to use a pair comparison procedure (Nunnally, 1978). The advantage of the pair comparison procedure is that it requires each reader to evaluate only two papers. The disadvantage of the procedure is that it requires 10 readers for five papers.

Selection of Readers

It is best to select readers from outside the state or region who are experienced educational researchers. The members of the selection committee can be of great assistance in identifying potential readers. Names of potential readers should be solicited from committee members (Appendix E).

Potential readers should be contacted in advance. Telephone contacts are the most efficient since some of the people named by the committee will not be willing or able to serve. When 10 readers have

agreed to serve the other names should be kept as alternates.

Review Process

Pairing the five papers with each of the other four papers results in 10 pairs of papers. These pairs are randomly assigned among the 10 readers. The papers are then sent to the readers with appropriate instructions (Appendix F). The work of the rater should be acknowledged when the papers are returned (Appendix G).

There are several ways to compare the papers when the readers have returned their ratings. The most straight forward is to compare the papers directly. If one paper is judged best against each of its four competitors, then it is judged the "Outstanding Paper." As an example, consider the data in Table 1.

Table 1

Pair Comparison Table

		Paper				
		A	B	C	D	E
	A	-	A	C	A	E
	B		-	C	B	E
Paper	C			-	C	C
	D				-	D
	E					-

Note that Paper C was judged best against each of the four other papers. Thus, Paper C would be judged the "Outstanding Paper."

In certain situations, there will be no clearcut winner using this procedure. Two papers may each be judged best against only three of the other four papers. In these situations, the tie must be broken. Two possible methods are available for breaking the tie. The most straight forward method would be to declare the winner based on the head-to-head comparison. That is, if Papers B and C were tied, the winner would be the one which was judged best when Paper B was compared directly with Paper C. Another method to break the tie would be to go back to the actual ratings of the judges on the research rating instrument. The total ratings given by each judge could be averaged and the winner would be the paper with the highest average.

Conclusion

A method for selecting the outstanding paper of a state or regional organization is described in this paper. It is research based, yet still manageable in a short period of time. The method has been used successfully for the past 4 years by the Mid-South Educational Research Association.

References

Nunnally, J. C. Psychometric theory (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1978.

Ward, A. W., Hall, B. W., & Schramm, C. F. Evaluation of published educational research: A national survey. American Educational Research Journal, 1975, 12(2), 109-128.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TIME LINE

FOR SELECTION OF OUTSTANDING PAPER

(IN WEEKS)

Activity	Begin	End
Competition announcement	1	1
Submission period	1	12
Initial review	12	18
Secure outside reviewers	12	18
Selection of finalists	18	19
Final review	19	23
Final selection	23	24

APPENDIX B

MSERA OUTSTANDING PAPER COMPETITION

Any member of the Mid-South Educational Research Association who submits an abstract for a proposed paper to be presented at the annual convention may enter the competition for the Outstanding Paper Award. The award recipient will have a summary of the paper published in the Mid-South Educational Researcher and the opportunity to present it at the AERA Annual Meeting in April. The Outstanding Paper will be selected according to the following procedures:

1. MSERA members who desire to participate in the competition must prepare and submit six copies of their research papers (no length designated) to the chair of the selection committee, Dr. James E. McLean, by August 1, 1981. (NOTE: This submission is in addition to the abstract of the paper that must be submitted to the Program Committee by August 1st to be considered for the annual program.)

2. By September 1st, members of the selection committee will review the papers to identify the 5-8 most outstanding papers among those submitted. A panel of impartial professional people from outside the MSERA region will evaluate these papers and submit their results to the selection committee.

3. The results of the panel's evaluation of the papers will be reported to the MSERA Board which will make the final decision on the award recipient. At the annual convention, the Board will announce the three highest rated papers in order of rank.

Members who desire to place their papers in competition for the award and the opportunity to represent MSERA at the 1982 AERA Annual Meeting are requested to send six copies of their research papers to:

Dr. James E. McLean
P. O. Box 4006
The University of Alabama
University, AL 35486

DEADLINE: August 1, 1981

MID-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Alabama
Arkansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Tennessee

P. O. Box 4006
University, AL 35486

August 4, 1981

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE

Dear _____:

Thank you for submitting your paper to be considered for the MSERA Outstanding Paper Competition. As you may know, the results will be announced at the Annual Meeting in Lexington, Kentucky, in November. In the meantime, please rest assured that your paper will receive every consideration.

Thank you again for considering MSERA Annual Meeting as a means of disseminating your research.

Sincerely,

James E. McLean
Vice President and Chairperson
Outstanding Paper Selection Committee

JEM:AW

APPENDIX D

RESEARCH RATING INSTRUMENT

The attached research rating instrument was adopted from one used by Ward, Hall, and Schramm (1975) in a study of published research in education. Each characteristic is rated on a five-point scale representing five levels of quality.

Rating	Level of Quality	Description
5	Excellent	A model of good practice
4	Good	A few minor defects
3	Mediocre	Not good, not bad
2	Poor	Some serious defects
1	Completely incompetent	A horrible example

Please rate each characteristic using the above five-point scale by circling the appropriate response. Use the combined results to rank the papers.

Most 1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

Least 10. _____

Ward, A. W., Hall, B. W., and Schramm, C. F. Evaluation of Published Educational Research: A National Survey, American Educational Research Journal. Spring, 1975, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 109-128.

RESEARCH RATING INSTRUMENT

Chacteristic	- Rating +
A. Title	
(1) Title is well related to content of article	1 2 3 4 5
B. Problem	
(2) Problem is clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(3) Hypotheses are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(4) Problem is significant	1 2 3 4 5
(5) Assumptions are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(6) Limitations of the study are stated	1 2 3 4 5
(7) Important terms are defined	1 2 3 4 5
C. Review of the literature	
(8) Coverage of the literature is adequate	1 2 3 4 5
(9) Review of the literature is well organized	1 2 3 4 5
(10) Studies are examined critically	1 2 3 4 5
(11) Source of important findings is noted	1 2 3 4 5
(12) Relationship of the problem to previous research is made clear	1 2 3 4 5
D. Procedures	
(13) Research design is described fully	1 2 3 4 5
(14) Research design is appropriate to solution of the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(15) Research design is free of specific weaknesses	1 2 3 4 5
(16) Population and sample are described	1 2 3 4 5
(17) Method of sampling is appropriate	1 2 3 4 5
(18) Data gathering methods or procedures are described	1 2 3 4 5
(19) Data gathering methods or procedures are appropriate to the solution of the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(20) Data gathering methods or procedures are used correctly	1 2 3 4 5
(21) Validity and reliability of data gathering procedures are established	1 2 3 4 5
E. Data Analysis	
(22) Appropriate methods are selected to analyze data	1 2 3 4 5
(23) Methods utilized in analyzing the data are applied correctly	
(24) Results of the analysis are presented clearly	1 2 3 4 5
(25) Tables and figures are effectively used	1 2 3 4 5
F. Summary and Conclusions	
(26) Conclusions are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(27) Conclusions are substantiated by the evidence presented	1 2 3 4 5
(28) Conclusions are relevant to the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(29) Conclusions are significant	1 2 3 4 5
(30) Generalizations are confined to the population from which the sample was drawn	1 2 3 4 5
G. Form and Style	
(31) Report is clearly written	1 2 3 4 5
(32) Report is logically organized	1 2 3 4 5
(33) Tone of the report displays an unbiased, impartial, scientific attitude	1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX E

MID-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION 12

Alabama
Arkansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Tennessee

P. O. Box 4009
University, AL 35486

June 15, 1981

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE

Dear _____:

I am pleased that you have agreed to serve on the MSERA Outstanding Paper Selection Committee. In order to familiarize you with the process we have been using for the past three years, I am enclosing a copy of the committee procedures as approved by the MSERA Board of Directors.

Most of our work comes between August 1 and November 1. At this time, I would appreciate you suggesting the names of five possible paper judges from outside the MSERA region. These people would have to read, rate, and rank only two papers since we use a pair comparison technique. Please send me their names, addresses, and phone numbers. We will be contacting them about the first of September.

If we get more than five entries, we, as a committee, will have to read them and choose the top five.

I look forward to working with you on this most important committee.

Sincerely,

James E. McLean
Vice President and Chairperson
Outstanding Paper Selection Committee

JEM:AW

Enclosure

MID-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Alabama
Arkansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Tennessee

P. O. Box 4006
University, AL 35486

September 17, 1981

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE

Dear _____:

My sincerest appreciation is expressed for your willingness to assist in selecting the Outstanding Paper for the 1981 Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association.

Enclosed you will find copies of two research papers, two rating instruments with instructions, and a return envelope. Please rate each paper on the appropriate instrument identified by a capital letter in black magic marker in the upper right hand corner of the instrument. Return the completed rating instruments to me in the enclosed envelope. Feel free to make any additional comments that might be helpful to the selection committee. You may discard the papers after completion of the rating instruments.

In order to meet the deadlines put on the committee, it would be helpful if you could return the rating instruments to me by October 16, 1981.

Thanks very much for your contribution to MSERA and our profession.

Sincerely,

James E. McLean
Vice President and Chairperson
Outstanding Paper Selection Committee

JEM/pek

Enclosures

APPENDIX F CONTINUED

RESEARCH RATING INSTRUMENT

The attached research rating instrument was adopted from one used by Ward, Hall, and Schramm (1975) in a study of published research in education. Each characteristic is rated on a five-point scale representing five levels of quality.

Rating	Level of Quality	Description
5	Excellent	A model of good practice
4	Good	A few minor defects
3	Mediocre	Not good, not bad
2	Poor	Some serious defects
1	Completely incompetent	A horrible example

Please rate each characteristic using the above five-point scale by circling the appropriate response. In the space below, indicate which of the two papers was better based on your overall judgment.

Better paper _____

Ward, A. W., Hall, B. W., and Schramm, C. F. Evaluation of Published Educational Research: A National Survey, American Educational Research Journal. Spring, 1975, Vol. 12, No. 2, pp. 109-128.

RESEARCH RATING INSTRUMENT

Chacteristic	- Rating +
A. Title	
(1) Title is well related to content of article	1 2 3 4 5
B. Problem	
(2) Problem is clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(3) Hypotheses are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(4) Problem is significant	1 2 3 4 5
(5) Assumptions are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(6) Limitations of the study are stated	1 2 3 4 5
(7) Important terms are defined	1 2 3 4 5
C. Review of the literature	
(8) Coverage of the literature is adequate	1 2 3 4 5
(9) Review of the literature is well organized	1 2 3 4 5
(10) Studies are examined critically	1 2 3 4 5
(11) Source of important findings is noted	1 2 3 4 5
(12) Relationship of the problem to previous research is made clear	1 2 3 4 5
D. Procedures	
(13) Research design is described fully	1 2 3 4 5
(14) Research design is appropriate to solution of the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(15) Research design is free of specific weaknesses	1 2 3 4 5
(16) Population and sample are described	1 2 3 4 5
(17) Method of sampling is appropriate	1 2 3 4 5
(18) Data gathering methods or procedures are described	1 2 3 4 5
(19) Data gathering methods or procedures are appropriate to the solution of the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(20) Data gathering methods or procedures are used correctly	1 2 3 4 5
(21) Validity and reliability of data gathering procedures are established	1 2 3 4 5
E. Data Analysis	
(22) Appropriate methods are selected to analyze data	1 2 3 4 5
(23) Methods utilized in analyzing the data are applied correctly	
(24) Results of the analysis are presented clearly	1 2 3 4 5
(25) Tables and figures are effectively used	1 2 3 4 5
F. Summary and Conclusions	
(26) Conclusions are clearly stated	1 2 3 4 5
(27) Conclusions are substantiated by the evidence presented	1 2 3 4 5
(28) Conclusions are relevant to the problem	1 2 3 4 5
(29) Conclusions are significant	1 2 3 4 5
(30) Generalizations are confined to the population from which the sample was drawn	1 2 3 4 5
G. Form and Style	
(31) Report is clearly written	1 2 3 4 5
(32) Report is logically organized	1 2 3 4 5
(33) Tone of the report displays an unbiased, impartial, scientific attitude	1 2 3 4 5

RESEARCH RATING INSTRUMENT

Chacteristic	- Rating +				
A. Title					
(1) Title is well related to content of article	1	2	3	4	5
B. Problem					
(2) Problem is clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
(3) Hypotheses are clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
(4) Problem is significant	1	2	3	4	5
(5) Assumptions are clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
(6) Limitations of the study are stated	1	2	3	4	5
(7) Important terms are defined	1	2	3	4	5
C. Review of the literature					
(8) Coverage of the literature is adequate	1	2	3	4	5
(9) Review of the literature is well organized	1	2	3	4	5
(10) Studies are examined critically	1	2	3	4	5
(11) Source of important findings is noted	1	2	3	4	5
(12) Relationship of the problem to previous research is made clear	1	2	3	4	5
D. Procedures					
(13) Research design is described fully	1	2	3	4	5
(14) Research design is appropriate to solution of the problem	1	2	3	4	5
(15) Research design is free of specific weaknesses	1	2	3	4	5
(16) Population and sample are described	1	2	3	4	5
(17) Method of sampling is appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
(18) Data gathering methods or procedures are described	1	2	3	4	5
(19) Data gathering methods or procedures are appropriate to the solution of the problem	1	2	3	4	5
(20) Data gathering methods or procedures are used correctly	1	2	3	4	5
(21) Validity and reliability of data gathering procedures are established	1	2	3	4	5
E. Data Analysis					
(22) Appropriate methods are selected to analyze data	1	2	3	4	5
(23) Methods utilized in analyzing the data are applied correctly					
(24) Results of the analysis are presented clearly	1	2	3	4	5
(25) Tables and figures are effectively used	1	2	3	4	5
F. Summary and Conclusions					
(26) Conclusions are clearly stated	1	2	3	4	5
(27) Conclusions are substantiated by the evidence presented	1	2	3	4	5
(28) Conclusions are relevant to the problem	1	2	3	4	5
(29) Conclusions are significant	1	2	3	4	5
(30) Generalizations are confined to the population from which the sample was drawn	1	2	3	4	5
G. Form and Style					
(31) Report is clearly written	1	2	3	4	5
(32) Report is logically organized	1	2	3	4	5
(33) Tone of the report displays an unbiased, impartial, scientific attitude	1	2	3	4	5

MID-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

Alabama
Arkansas
Kentucky
Louisiana
Mississippi
Tennessee

P. O. Box 4006
University, Alabama 35486

October 16, 1981

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, STATE

Dear _____:

On behalf of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, I express my sincerest appreciation for the fine job you did in evaluating the papers in our 1981 "Outstanding Paper" competition. I regret that in order to maintain the anonymity of the process, the association cannot give more visible recognition to reviewers, such as yourself, in the Proceedings of the Association.

Please accept my thanks personally and in behalf of MSERA for your valuable contribution to the Association and our profession.

Sincerely,

James E. McLean
Vice-President and Chairperson
Outstanding Paper Selection Committee

JEM:AW